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THE  
MODERATE  
MAN'S  
PROPOSALL  
TO THE  
PARLIAMENT  
ABOUT  
TITHES.  
IN

Behalf of the Magistrate, Mini-  
ster, and People.

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L O N D O N

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## *The moderate man's proposal to the Parliament, &c.*



Having formerly heard a general out-cry, & of late many renewed complaints against Tithes, and observed in the present tempers of men, that much violence is in the spirits of those that are both for and against them, which at this season may be as dangerous as the contest is general, several things being of so great and universal concernment, and matter of profit being on both sides, makes every one more eager. I shall presume to offer a few things for a general accommodation. Some advise that the Parliament for a season, till things are better settled, may lay aside the debate, which is counsel most dangerous, drawing upon them the certain displeasure, not only of thousands of their friends, but also of the general spirit of the Nation, for though I know many men out of their care to preserve a godly Ministry and comfortable maintenance, will both plead for, and willingly pay Tithes; yet is their number as few, as is the good, compared with the bad party of the people; for we see how pleasing profit is unto all, and indeed those that plead for them, do it rather as standing for a maintenance, than justifying the manner of raising it. And it concerns the Parliament, as things stand,

as much as in them lies to compose and satisfy the Nation, and to make them sensible of that ease and freedom, which they have long, and do now more than ever expect from them.

Contraries do best illustrate each other, and when the Parliament by the complainings of their people, do find wherein they are grieved; they may know best how to apply a remedy; and therefore it is the greatest wisdom, with readiness to heare, and with all possible speed to redress, which will unite and engage the people; and seeing the Parliament out of their tender care to preserve a godly Ministry, with a comfortable maintenance, have resolved not to take away Tithes till another way can be found out for their livelyhoods; and yet to gratifie those that complain against Tithes, have ordered a grand Committee to consider of another maintenance, I shall offer to their consideration the substance of what is said against them, and then a way how to raise an equivalent maintenance, as sure, more just, and every way more suitable to that reformation we would have; and which will be in all respects better for the Ministry, and more pleasing to the godly amongst them; and standing upon a surer foundation than Tithes.

*The chief objections against Tithes are made.*

1. By the Magistrate, who doth or hath cause to complain that they are troublesome and vexatious, seeing more suits, strife and debate is about them than any other thing in the Nation, which is a great injury to the peace of the whole.

2. The godly Minister complains they are troublesome to him, and a great interruption to his duty, keeping him from his study, retirement, and cumbering him with cares, suits, and worldly business.

3. The Minister & people complain they are a continual occasion of offence between them, and keeps them in debate and strife, and hinders that love and content which should be to one another, and so becomes a bar to his work, and renders his Ministry unprofitable amongst them.

4. The whole body of the godly Ministry complains that Tithes, and first Fruits, and Tenths, are a shame to our reformation, and to the Magistrate that doth not provide a more suitable maintenance,

all the reformed Churches having cast them off, as unbecoming the Gospel.

5. The body of the people of the Nation, especially the Ploughman, who should above all others be encouraged, complains they are the great hinderance of tillage, husbandry, and honest industry, and the cause why so many Moores, and Waits, and Commons are in this Land, and so many Meadows and Pastures grown barren for want of plowing; the Tithes being more worth than the Land, and the clear profit, and the reason why corn is so dear, and this Nation upon every unreasonable seed-time or harvest, forced to seek bread from other Countreys, when as this Land is so fit for corn it might both supply our selves, and be as a granary to the Low Countreys and Neighbouring Nations.

6. Many Towns and Parishes complains, that their Tithes belong to Improprators, and only small stipends to the Minister, and unless they can have some augmentation from greater Livings, they neither can, nor ever shall get Ministers, and thus its conceived, a third part of the Nation lies, and must for ever continue without godly preaching Ministers for want of maintenance, while others goes away, one with as much as might serve two or three.

7. Many who are godly men, though differing from the Ministry, do conscientiously scruple the payment of them, as being a jewish or popish maintenance, and many godly Ministers themselves have left their people, because they could not receive them, and most men know that their bottom and foundation is unsound, and the very title, since the Ecclesiastical Courts were put down, questionable.

8. The temporal laws which give trebble value where they are not set out, are so severe and unbecoming, a Ministry, who preach up Equity and righteousness, that the sober and godly Minister is ashamed, that his maintenance should be forced with such penalties, which though some of them cannot take, yet many doe to the reproach of the whole and oppression of the people.

9. Since the Ecclesiastical law and Courts were thrown down, the title, especially about personall and small tithes is so uncertain; the temporall lawes being very deficient, and wayes of recovery so differing, and Courts so divers; that its hard to know how or where rightly to lay an action about them, and if tithes be of small value,

he trebble damage, (no costs being to be had) will not try the suite.

*It is therefore proposed.*

That a moderate value may be put upon every mans tithes, as it is worth *communibus annis*, and the same charged on the land, and tithes discharged for ever: This is but that which the Ordinary, Patron, and Incumbent might formerly have done; as to all small tithes; compound, settle a rate, or *Modus decimandi*; and which the Parliament may doe without injury to any mans propriety; and as to the right by law, have it stand upon the bottome it had before much strengthened and confirmed by Act of Parliament.

This takes away tithes, which burthens the consciences of many, and swearing about them, which is alike trouble to some; It frees the body from prisons, and the Estate from trebble damages; It takes away the great cause of difference between Minister and people, and eases the Minister of much charge and trouble in gathering them; and sets the husbandman at liberty to husband his land as he please.

And to the end that the Magistrate may be enabled to supply, as far as is possible, all destitute places and parishes with able Ministers, and have wherewith to maintayn them; and may also have it in his care to turn out those that are bad; and bring in those that are good.

It is further proposed; That all rents or rates thus settled in lieu of tithes, may be brought to one Treasury in each County, to be ordered and disposed by Commissioners, who may also have the power, of placing, displacing and allotting maintenance to Ministers, with instructions to make allowance proportionable to the charge of each Minister; that every one may have a competency, and none a superfluity; and thus its conceived the great livings will make up the small to be a livelyhood.

Patrons may have their right of presentation, and the Incumbent to be allowed a competent maintenance, and the rest to goe to others.

Let the Treasurer have a moderate allowance to goe out of the whole, and let no Minister pay any thing for fees, but once every quarter

quarter or halfe year have his money for sending for.

The Overteer for the poor in each parish to collect and gather the rent and pay it to the Treasurers, and if any refuse to pay, let him take a distresse as neer the value as may be, and sell the same to the best advantage; and return the overplus, if the party refuse to accept it, let it goe in part of payment towards the next.

If it be disliked to bring all into a Treasury, or to take any thing from the disposal of the Patron, every parish may be settled as they are, only the *species* altered; but for many weighty reasons, too large to be inserted in this short paper, the best way both for Magistrate, Minister and people is to have all come to a Treasury.

The tithes of Impropriatours to be also settled in a rate; and so his inheritance is ascertained for ever; and he may sell to the people as he please.

*In Order to the setting the rate upon tithes.*

Let Commissions out of the Chancery be forthwith issued to all Countyes in England to estimate, survey and return the values of the tithes and glebes of all parishes in each County, and to whom they belong; which may be done by the Sheriffs and Justices, or Commissioners; a rate being set upon the parish, let the parishoners choose as many arbitrators as they please to subdivide and apportion the same amongst them (which they will like better than to have it done by others)

The surveys being made, and a rate set upon every parish, town, and farm, let a book fairly written be returned into the Chancery, and another to remain in each County with the Clerk of the Peace, that recourse may be had thereunto upon every occasion of difference.

This will continue the whole revenue to the Ministry, and establish it upon a far surer foundation than now it stands, and free it from those many just exceptions to which it is lyable.

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*FINIS.*

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